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GENERAL DISCUSSION ON PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21, FOCUSING ON THE CROSS-SECTORAL COMPONENTS OF AGENDA 21 AND THE CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF SUSTAINABILITY

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman

Revised text of Commission decisions on major groups

1. The Commission recognized the indispensable role that major groups and their representatives play in the implementation of Agenda 21, but acknowledged the need to improve the quality of information about the problems, needs and contributions of major groups to the implementation of Agenda 21 and other commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

2. The Commission stressed the vital role of women, in particular, in bringing about sustainable development. The Commission expressed the view that the forthcoming United Nations conferences, such as the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace will be conducive to the empowerment of women that is necessary to enable them to play that vital role.

3. The Commission also recalled the central place of future generations within the concept of sustainable development, and encouraged the participation of children and youth, and their organizations, in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the need to increase efforts in relevant education and training to attain the changes in attitude of present and future generations necessary for sustainable development.

4. Governments and international organizations, as well as major group representatives themselves, particularly those from the developing countries, are encouraged to take concrete steps to enhance the involvement of major groups and to provide information on the extent of involvement of major group organizations comprising, inter alia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in efforts and programmes to realize the goals of Agenda 21. The Commission suggested that such information, submitted on a voluntary basis, might include:

(a) The extent of major group involvement in sustainable development activities, including participation in project design and implementation and evaluation of projects at the local, national, regional, subregional and international levels;

(b) Innovative methods that have increased the quality and quantity of consultations with major group representatives and organizations;

(c) Indicators of major group involvement, including financial and resource allocations made to them, as well as their own involvement in the provision of technical assistance and other types of support for Agenda 21 activities;

(d) Identification of obstacles and difficulties related to major group participation and steps taken to overcome them;

(e) Compilation and publication of case-studies, preferably undertaken in the four regional areas, by major groups and Governments, on the successful or unsuccessful efforts of major groups, in sustainable development programmes and activities; these case-studies should also include a one-page executive summary.

5. Such information should be provided annually, in the context of reports and periodic communications on the activities relevant to the Agenda 21 clusters to be discussed at future sessions of the Commission in accordance with the multi-year programme of work of the Commission.

6. The Secretary-General is requested to continue to include relevant information received from major groups in the documentation prepared for future sessions of the Commission.

7. The Commission stresses the need for major groups, their representatives and organizations to play an active and substantive role in the implementation of Agenda 21, including the holding of seminars, round-tables and multi-stakeholder meetings on the yearly thematic topics discussed by the Commission.

8. The Commission calls upon international organizations, particularly those with field offices, within their respective mandates and in compliance with the laws, sustainable development strategies and priorities of the countries concerned, to enhance the contribution of major group organizations to sustainable development and to encourage more active involvement of major group representatives in their activities.

9. The Commission encourages all major groups, in particular those in the private sector, to engage in creating multi-stakeholder partnerships and to carry out concrete partnership projects.

10. The Commission recommends that the overall access of major groups, including non-governmental organizations, to the Commission's work throughout the year be clarified and enhanced, and, without prejudice to the outcome of the general review of arrangements for consultations with non-governmental organizations to be carried out by the Economic and Social Council, recommends (a) that the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994 place non-governmental organizations accredited to the Commission by Council decision 1993/220 on the Roster, as envisaged in Council decision 1993/215, and (b) that the Council continue to grant Roster status to those non-governmental organizations that were accredited to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and which confirm their interest in being accredited to the Commission.